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Vance Thompson, editor
Thomas Fleming and
T. E. Powers, artists



LEADER

Democracy is bankrupt.

And the world turns to the new hypocrisy of science.

And what has science done for this generation? What one of her promises has she kept?

She has hunted God out of heaven, but she has not been able to kill in man a thirst for the infinite. She has pushed further out and ever further the shining circle of knowledge; always far beyond gloom the old depths of irritating conjecture, of anxious ignorance. There is always the tragic hope, the difficult unknown. Surely life is none the easier because science has emptied heaven of God. We have lost a definite form of life and are thrown back into the dolorous and vague.

Yet even men of letters march ahead of this charlatan, beating the tom-tom, crying "Great is science!" Renan predicted that there will come a day when the useless artist will give way to the savant. In its second intention this prediction amounts to the statement that as science has destroyed God it will destroy the sense of the beautiful. Do you believe this? It is one of the intellectual hypocrisies of the day. The antithesis is plain. Science explains and art creates; science decomposes and art composes; science destroys illusion and art perpetuates it. Science has destroyed the God who animated nature; now it is destroying nature itself, leaving only the play of force and matter. The rainbow was the harp of Iris—illusion! It was a bow God placed in the heavens—illusion! It was a curious-patterned curtain of sun-shot mist—illusion! Science has decided it is a combination of petty, infinite vibrations. You loved a woman—illusion! The psychologist has resolved your love into nerve-excitations. Science slays the illusion. Is Renan entirely wrong in forecasting a time when men will find it as puerile to believe in the existence of material or spiritual beauty as they find it now to believe in Dante's God? And if this be true, will not art disappear? There is no art which is not serious. When faith is dead art will die. There will remain only those who play with appearances for amusement's sake—dressing fairy-tales for mocking spirits. The scientist will be the only intellectual aristocrat, dictator of facts. But facts are not truth, and where will truth be? Ah, my dear fellow, science decomposes the harmony of the universe, but it does not destroy it. It reduces the soul to its simpler elements, woven of sensation and movement, but it explains neither sensation nor movement nor the curious weaving together. Infinite molecular vibrations, the scientist says wisely; but you are much wiser, for you say, "The rainbow still hangs in the sky." The rainbow, shifty-tinted like a lizard's back, hanging in the sky is true for you, far truer than the molecular vibrations of the scientist. The astronomer measures the movement of the spheres; for you their harmony is still the truth. More—your truth is the greater.

As fast as science discovers new ground the poet plots the curves of a new illusion. What science calls true to-day, to-morrow is the divine lie of romance. Science quarries the marble; art chisels it into the image of God.



LIGHTS IN THE FOG

The twilight of an age-old generation; the gray falls night and day in this drab present. A gray twilight, crowding down on every side, insistent and implacable. We stroll like one in the reek of a London fog, half stifled, timorous, half amused—so one strolls through the reek of a London fog, looking for landmarks; on his coat the orchids wither; he sees the lamps flare (street-lamps painting red smears along the fog), girls in the fog deliciously unreal, distorted by wet garments; so one gropes in Regent street and hears the sound of wheels braying over the asphalt; cabs pass dimly—

A gray-drab age, woven of innumerable noises and silver silences, stretched round us, over us, close to us, like the pale blanket of a London fog, so pale, insistent, and implacable.

* * * * *

Last night the orchids withered on my breast as I wandered in the gray world. And in the dusk I saw the cab-lamps flare. And in the twilight girls went flickering, winsomely unreal, distorted in wet garments. I heard the noise of the "L" trains grinding in the upper air; the feet and little feet that went nowhither, passing everywhere; the sound of voices, street cries, and cabs in the street.

"Man, man, this is not real," God said, "cover your eyes and dream, for that is true."

The dreams I summoned came, so blate and pale and foolishly arrayed—like ghosts of mad women laughing together; dreams white and gray.

* * * * *

The room was full of firelight; the mirror shone with the red flames of the candles—little hot, red, sensual tongues of flame. I opened the piano and played till out of the music came the truth in a dream—the gold of the Rhine, imperious, the splendor of one great sin, imperious, trailing away like gold pieces sinking in the great waters. And then the music shaped

a little jeering song of the Paris streets, and through the song, I saw a sexless face, blue with the morphine, and heard Yvette sing,

*J' peux plus dormir; des qu'il fait noir
J' vois grouiller un tas d' chotes dans l' sombre,
Des chauves-souris des grands yeux d'ombre,
Puis des rats comm' dans l' Assommoir,
Alors j' prends l' façon qui console,
Vite une figure et ca m' remet.
C'est d' puis c' matin ma troisième fiole
Dire que j' pourrai dormir jamais!
La morphin'! Mais c'est un peu d' reve,
Un peu d'oubli! L'oubli c'est tout.*

The voice screamed feebly through the smoky hall. The blonde lights fell in dust of chrysoprase on her thin hair and darting neck. In Montmatre—

* * * * *

Such a gray dream!

Once I saw Pan gambling at five-stones with a naked nymph. Her limbs were very long, small-boned, and slender and comely; her eyes were slant, like an Egyptian girl's, but she was a Greek nymph. In a pale-green brake full of the faded shadows Puvis paints; the light sown through the poplars dappled her shoulders leprously as she squatted there gambling with Pan. They played at five-stones, for a Greek artist scratched it all for me on the bronze cover of a mirror-case—ages ago for me.

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SALOMÉ

Last night — but when was night and when was day?
Last night the Marquise signed to me as she passed — so — with her fan. I followed. It was dark, but I could hear the creaking of her silken undergarments — faint and intimate, whispering of strange fervors. I followed her whispering garments. Followed — I came to an iron door set in the hillside. I beat on the door. Little jeering laughter curled round the lintel like whimpering flames. I leaned my face against the door and cried to her —

Oh, little mocking face set in yellow hair, and little mouth all red —
Behind the iron door.

The gray present, insistent, implacable, full of vehemence and noise, presses on every side; one goes blindly, as in the reek of a London fog.



THE renaissance of the silent drama is only a few years old; probably the most notable contribution made to modern pantomime is the "Salome" of Mr. Charles Henry Meltzer, with which Loie Fuller has inflamed Paris. A marvellous little play — a tragic idyll — in which Salome dances in the electric lights to the undoing of John the Baptist. The play is in four acts and a prologue. Herodias is ill at ease, for Herod, the tetrarch, has fallen under the influence of John the Baptist and threatens to put her away. And Salome comes, still a child; with all the white and rose fragilities of girlhood she dances with the children. Herod sees her and a passion for the child burns in him. Herodias has found her weapon. She forces the child to dance again and the tetrarch's eyes shine with impatient passion. Salome dances — frightened, wondering. John the Baptist looks on and determines to save her from her destiny. Again the girl is forced to dance — in anguish and terror. As she sinks to the ground Herod seizes her in his arms. John the Baptist interferes and is led away by the guards. The girl begs for the prophet's life and the tetrarch makes a condition. Dazed with grief, half mad, she dances, dances. Again Herod seizes her and she surrenders herself to save the prophet's life. And at that moment Herodias enters bearing the head of John the Baptist. Salome falls as one dead.

This is but a meagre skeleton of the play; it can give you little idea of this poem without words; once —

Once I knew a girl in Paris, a great, wicked, blonde girl, of extreme beauty, and I loved her years ago; last summer, in Dr. Fleury's laboratory, I saw blonde bones swaying.

"Tiens! 'Tis the skeleton of Fifine," he said.

Fifine was of extreme beauty and wicked, but the skeleton was futile.



Wagnerism, as M. Teodor de Wyzewa and other subtle critics have pointed out, does not consist simply in admiring the works of Richard Wagner. Indeed, there is much in Wagner's dramas and writings that is not admirable. The works are what they are—examples of an artistic theory, and this theory on which Wagner laid unceasing stress calls for the fusion of all forms of art in a common intention. It is an interesting question how far the Wagnerian spirit has entered into the works of modern poets, painters, and men of letters.

The poets we know.

Stéphane Mallarmé, for instance, this bizarre poet who for the last twenty years has published incomprehensible poems in obscure reviews under his high-sounding pseudonym. Him we know and his dark rival, Adore Floupette, and their school of imitators, Wagnerolaters and pessimists. It was not long ago that men instructed in letters saw no indignity in asking whether Mallarmé was a fool or a mystifier. But that is past. No one to-day questions the place of Mallarmé as an artist of high and delicate attainments. He is master of his art—

Un art bien élaboré
Et du vulgaire abhoré

His belief, like that of the Parnassians, was that the thoughts and images commonly called poetical may be better expressed in prose, and that it is not the business of poetry to translate landscapes, morals, and obvious sentiments into tortured language. And the poet's business, then?

It was to "evoke in the soul musical emotions, different from those music can evoke." Recognizing the kinship between certain syllables and certain emotions, M. Mallarmé has endeavored to perfect this poetic language. He has tried to build a symphony of words, in various modes, rhythms, and sonorities. Over all he places the musical development. And for this very reason he chooses banal subjects, so that not even the most eviscerated thought may clog the march of the melody.

I have compared him with the Parnassians, but there is a wonderful difference—Wagnerian.

Let me illustrate this.

You know Paul Verlaine, this golden, vagrom man, who sings as unpremeditatedly as Burns sang; who plays on words as a naïf guitarist teases the strings, and he is of Parnassus. It is the note of the school—improvisation. The Parnassians improvise; Mallarmé composes. Leconte de Lisle, Villiers de L'Isle Adam, Mendes—all improvisers, wantoning with chance attractions by the way, charmed by the incidental. Mallarmé develops his melody according to a definite plan. A conscientious logic creates the theme with—but nothing more—its necessary expansion. Neither a painter nor a musician, he has chosen with extreme felicity the images, rhythms, and sounds most adequate for his subject. "Les Fleurs"—it is the adagio of a romantic sonata or one of Bach's preludes.

Clearly this poet is a product of the Wagnerian theory.

Of the Wagnerists of this country Mr. James Gibbons Huneker is the most hierarchal, and here is a subject made to his hand. One other suggestion: Mallarmé, like Wagner, sees all things as symbols. A hospital? It is the life of man. A bell-ringer? The poet, clamant for the ideal. And a rose is Herodias.

Other poets have believed that poetry should be pure music, but Mallarmé believes that it should signify something and indeed create a mode of life. Create a life? Poetry, art of rhythms and sound, ought, being a music, to create emotions; emotions are inseparable from the ideas that provoke them; grief and pleasure do not exist; there are only sad or joyous emotions. Therefore, in poetry the poet must give not only the emotions but their causes. The emotions evoked by syllables

WAGNERIAN POETS AND PAINTERS



are so delicate and tenuous that they require the adjunct of precise ideas. Mallarmé's theory is that the object of poetry is emotions justified by the subjects. And, as one has said, his theory is quadrate with Wagner's theory of art. But the painters? To be sure there is Puvis de Chavannes, whose work is in the Wagnerian spirit. Unfortunately it is not in the academies that one finds Wagnerian art or art of any kind. The painters, since they began to live like other folks and love their own wives to the neglect of their neighbors' wives, have given up all concern for art; like the agitated Hebrews they are interested only in the laws of supply and demand. Naturally they do not create works of art, for which, in a democratic society, there can never be a demand. They employ the process—design and color—but they have given up artistic work. They do not, in Wagner's strenuous phrase, create life. To create life—it is the duty of art.

You remember the Master's argument, which is indeed a page from Schopenhauer. The world in which we live and which we call real is in truth merely a creation of our souls. The soul can not go out of itself, and the phenomena which it believes exterior to itself are but its own ideas. To see, to understand, is to create appearances and, therefore, to create life. Art creates consciously.

Painters descriptive and anecdotal; but this is mere literature. But recall a painting of the symphonist Rembrandt; Rubens, whose intense color schemes suggest at times a real vision of life; or Watteau's sad elegancies, gracious as the andante of certain of Mozart's quatuors. It is evident that emotional painting is no new thing, that there were generals before Agamemnon. To-day, however, the artist faces a new problem. The way is not simple. The old masters have proved that painting may be descriptive of real sensations or suggestive of real emotions. But painting can not be both. To-day the necessity of choice is greater than ever—a choice which is distinctly in the line of Wagner's art. Degas has chosen; he describes; he represents the things he sees, and he is creating life. Puvis has chosen. Between them are the artists who deform their descriptions in the vain hope of making them poetic.

In France Wagner's influence has been more widely felt than in any other country—you see it in Manet and Cézanne, in Monet, even in Cazin—this simple, though rather coarsely sentimental painter of grays—in Odilon Redon's landscapes of fantastic desolation and even in the cruel and bitter visions of Félicien Rops.

The Wagnerian spirit is there, but one sees it as through a glass darkly.



NORDAU

*If you happen to be born in a little Magyar town,
Where the student flicks the Jew and the trooper rides him down,
Then a modest hate of man is not wholly out of place
And the high gods may forgive you for a bitterness of race.
But its little then one knows
Of the golden life that goes*

In the world where God gave sunlight and the artist gave the rose.

*And when you walk abroad from the little Magyar town
A new world—like the trooper—rides your old ideals down.
And your little copper counters, when you test them, do not ring,
And the warrant of the Beschdin is an unregarded thing.*

*If you ask the men you meet, "What's the latest thing in dyes?"
"What's the newest thing in white-goods?" they will stare with troubled eyes.
"Has science weighed the sunbeam?" They will tell you—who but they?—
Of the sculptured stones of Chartres and the chansons of Bellay.*

*They have news of Botticelli and Piero Cosimo,
Of the word that Plato whispered they converse, as they go—
Of the subtle moods of music and the wayward moods of art,
Of the dream that came at twilight and the hope that will not part.*

*But "What's the great equation of the Ego and 'I am'?"
And "What's the weight of sunbeams?" and "What's the price of ham?"
They walk on toward the morning and the stars are young and glad,
While you glower on a mile-stone and whisper, "They are mad!"*

Man, man, who cares or knows?

In the golden life that goes

In the world where God gave sunlight and the artist gave the rose.

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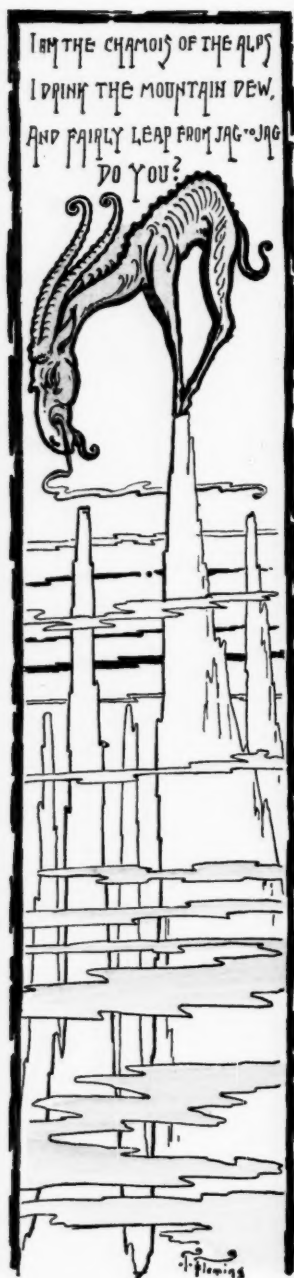
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Pierrot played a practical joke on his father, the moon. Disastrous was the consequence. He fell far, far into this mundane life, with its hot and cold fits of domesticity, its joy, ambition, love, and death. In the end he was weary of life.

PANTOMIME



SCALPEL OR BRANDING-IRON?



"La critique n'a qu'un droit," said Victor Hugo, "le droit de se taire."

The critics have never been of this opinion; to-day they talk more than ever. Literature is merely the servant of criticism; it furnishes subjects and pretexts for critical — soi-disant critical — articles. Criticism is every man's trade; young men do not write love verses in these days; they write essays on Ibsen. It is the age of criticism.

And I — moi, qui vous parle — am a critic who does not believe in the Hugoan theory of holding one's tongue. In London a few months ago I tried to dignify my trade by referring to the science of criticism. Science, quotha!

An English novelist laughed derisively when I used the phrase. To his mind criticism is merely a matter of personal spleen or individual appreciation. I myself have been a victim of the theory of personal criticism. Even now I recognize that the account one gives of one's intellectual adventures among masterpieces — a phrase of Anatole France — must be largely a matter of temperament. It may be that I can make plain the difference between the old criticism, which is futile, and the new; that I may be able to justify my use of the word "scientific" in connection with what the dull people fancy is merely a pastime or a gentle art of making enemies. The old criticism was not complex. For instance, Addison, the father of English criticism, had a large body of readers. In discussing Milton's "Paradise Lost" he virtually said: "This book pleases me because it conforms to a certain standard of epic poetry which I have made by comparing passages in Homer and Virgil; therefore it will please the people who usually agree with my judgment, as it has pleased not only me, but other respectable authors." This genre of criticism has not quite gone out. The reader of newspapers and periodicals is familiar with it. He has read the bibliographies, the reports of theatrical performances, the impressions of art exhibitions. The average art or dramatic criticism is made up in almost equal parts of middle-class opinions, uncertain axioms of the craft, and personal prejudices. In the critic it presupposes a degree of familiarity with the subject, a good memory, a mind open to artistic impressions, and a certain sympathy with the tastes of the average sensual man and the average sentimental woman. This is criticism of a very primitive order. It serves its ephemeral purpose, but it is absolutely without permanent value. Critics like George Moore, Anatole France, Jules Lemaitre, Dr. Brandes, George Bernard Shaw, are argumentative or appreciative; they write charming or grotesque dissertations, and they are always futile.

The first step — a distinct step — toward scientific criticism was made by Henri Taine. It is epoch-making, his preface to the "History of English Literature." Therein he explains his method. Bluntly put, his method is a sort of dialectic, passing from the work of art to the man who produced it, from this physical man to his soul, and then to the causes of his psychological state. In other words, he looks upon history as a psychological problem; of all historical documents, the most important is the work of art — book, picture, marble, music — and the most significant is that which has the highest artistic value. Taine sums up his method in a sentence: "I intend to write the history of a literature and seek in it the psychology of a people."

Literature then is a department of moral science. The critic considers the work of art, not in itself, but as the sign of the man or people he is studying. The book is merely the algebraic sign of the race. The new criticism claims to be a science. From relics of the stone age the antiquary reconstructs a civilization; from certain manifestations of certain minds the critic passes to the minds themselves and the group they represent. The manifestations which he studies — pictures, books, music, monuments, statues — have one common characteristic: they are aesthetic; they all tend to be beautiful and excite emotion. At this point the new critic parts company with the old. He analyzes them, not to see how nearly these manifestations attain beauty, but rather how they realize the beautiful and in what they are original and individual. In the end he is able to establish a parallel series of psychological particulars.

II

A work of art — made up of images vivid and precise as in sculpture, or vague and ideal as in music — has the one aim of creating emotion. But this emotion — the

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aesthetic — differs from others in this, that it is not translated into acts, but is an end to itself. For example, a novel consists of a series of written phrases designed to represent a touching spectacle; the emotion that one feels in reading it, or when one has read it, is an end to itself. The emotion one gets from reading the author's account is more feeble than that one would have experienced in watching the actual events; it is, in addition, a passive emotion, provoking neither acts nor a tendency to action. One can not rush to the aid of the hero when murder is being done in the thirteenth chapter; if he marries happily the pleasure one feels is without practical consequences. Now the first duty of the critic who endeavors to extract from a book — from several books of the same author — psychological data, is to determine the nature and peculiarity of the work, the emotion excited, the means employed. Here is the problem: what emotions does the author excite and what means does he use? What does he express and how does he express it? Nor is it difficult to classify these emotions. The system-makers are wrong; the aesthetic emotions do not belong to a special class, separate from the ordinary emotions; the aesthetic emotion is merely the passive form of its corresponding ordinary emotion. The emotion of beauty is no more aesthetic than that of fear. Beauty is but one note on the gamut of art. The sad, the terrible, the strange, even the grotesque and hideous, belong to the same family as the admirable, the gracious, the comely, the beautiful. The essential quality of aesthetic emotions is that they are but feeble indices of joy or pain. The emotions which come from "The Twelfth Night" and "Hamlet" do not differ greatly save in tone, timbre, force. Each of them keeps intact the element of excitement, but the feelings of grief or mirth, which would in real life accompany this excitement, remain inert — fictive and innocuous. And so "Hamlet," the "Symphony in C Minor," Rembrandt's "Good Samaritan," Puvis' "Bellum," the cathedral of Tours, the "Divine Comedy," give the shock of tragedy, but not the wound. And art then — the definition projects itself — is the creation in the soul of a life powerful but sterile, without action or grief — a life of aesthetic emotion.

In his analysis the scientific critic may designate the passive emotions of a work of art by the coefficients of the ordinary emotions. He speaks therefore of the mystery, the truth, the horror, the compassion, the despair or encouragement, of a work of art. He is merely making use of coefficients. Thus Poe has horror and curiousness; Zola, sympathy and hopelessness; Mozart, serenity and comely gaiety. And from these primary data the critic passes to the more complex, until in the end he has disentangled from the creation the soul of the creator. The work of art in itself is sterile and fictive; it is to the critic a means of knowing the soul of its author, the soul of the men of his day and race. Scientific criticism is concerned not with the work of art, but with the psychological and social condition of which it is the algebraic sign.

III

Better, you say, the joyous, vagrom men, who have intellectual adventures among masterpieces, who vapor and are unconcerned? You may be right, but still it is pleasant to know that there is justification for the high seriousness of the phrase, "the science of criticism." For in these days we are all critics — and most of us are inutile.





JAMES
GIBBONS
HUNEKER

*Embarcadere
Des grands Mysteres,
Madone et miss
Diane-Artemis,
Sainte Vigie
De nos orgies,
Dame tres lasse
De nos terrasses,
Sois l' Ambulance
De nos croyances!*

LAFORGUE.

The hot hush of noon was stirred into uneasy billows by the shuffling of sandals over the marble porches; all Rome was speeding to the spectacle in the circus. A brave day, the wind perfumed, the sky a hard blue, and the dark shadows cool, caressing. Thousand-colored awnings fluttered and fainted in the breeze; the hearts of the people on the benches were gay. Diocletian, the imperial master, had baited the trap of the day's sport with Christians. Living, palpitating, human, Christian flesh was to be sacrificed, and the gossips spoke in clear, crisp sentences as they enumerated the deadly list and dwelt upon certain names with significant emphasis. The multitude followed with languid interest the chariot races, the gladiatorial displays; even a fierce duel 'twixt two tawny-skinned, yellow-haired barbarians evoked not a single cry. Rome was in a killing mood and thumbs were not upturned. The imperial monster gloomed as he sat on high in his gold and ivory tribune and spoke not; his eyes were sullen with satiated lusts and his heart was flint in his bosom. As the afternoon waxed and waned the murmur of the people modulated clamorously, and one voice shrilled forth, "Give us the Christians!" The cry was taken up by a thunderous chorus that sang the antiphony of hate until the earth trembled and Diocletian smiled. The low doors of the iron cages adjoining the animals opened, and a dreary group of men, women, and children pushed to the centre of the arena; a quarter of a million eyes, burning with the anticipation of slaughter, watched them. Shouts of disappointment and yells of disgust arose. The Christians did not present to the experts promise of a lasting fight with the lions. A sorry crew they were, huddled together with downcast eyes, their lips moving in silent prayer as they awaited the animals. In the fierce onslaught that followed nothing could be heard but the grunts and growls of the beasts. A whirlwind of sand and blood, a fierce, brief battle of keepers armed with metal bars heated white, and the lions retired to the cages with dripping jaws and gorged bellies. The sand was hastily upturned, while the bored multitude listlessly witnessed the interment of the mangled bones of the martyrs. It was all over within the quarter of the hour. Rome was not yet satisfied, and Diocletian made no sign. Wofully had the spectacle failed to tickle the epicurean palate of the mob. It had been so often glutted with butchery that it longed for more delicate devilries—new depths of death. Then a slim figure, clad in clinging garments of pure white, was led to the imperial tribune, and those about Diocletian saw him start as from a wan dream. Her bronze-colored hair fell about her shoulders; her eyes recalled the odor of violets; and she gazed at Diocletian, but saw him not, for she was full of the vision of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. She was a fair child; her brow was a tablet as yet untouched by the stylus of sin, and the populace hungered for her. Fresh incense was thrown in the brazier of coals that glowed before the garlanded statue of Venus, two flutes intoned a languishing Lydian measure, and the maiden gazed upon the ground and trembled. A venerable man of impassive countenance and habited as a priest, addressed her thrice, but her eyes never wandered, neither did she speak. She refused to prostrate herself and worship Venus, and, angered at the insult offered to the beautiful Foe of Virginity, Rome screamed and hooted and demanded that she be given over to the torture. Diocletian watched. A blare from trumpets, like a brazen imprecation, and the public pulse pounded furiously as a young man, with only a strip of white linen about his loins, was dragged to the Venus. A goodly youth to look at—slender, lithe, olive-skinned with black curls clustering over a broad brow, and eyeballs blood-streaked, and his mouth made a blue mark across his face. He looked threateningly at Diocletian as he monotonously intoned his answers to the interrogations of the priest. The multitude surged with pleasure and breathlessly awaited the punishment of the contumacious Christians. Sturdy brutes seized them and stripped them of their garments; but they stood unabashed, for they saw the gates of Paradise open—and Diocletian's eyes were a deep black. Urged by strong hands the maid and youth were bound together with withes. Then the subtle cruelty of the torture seized Rome's fancy. The pair knew each other as betrothed, but separated by the Son of the Carpenter of Galilee, who had filled their souls with light which was never before on land or sea. She looked into his eyes and saw the bloody figure of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and he moistened his parched lips. The sun blistered their tender skins and laughed at their Christ, as the Venus in her cool grot sent them wreathed smiles bidding them love and worship her and forget their pale God. And the two flutes made dreamy music. Quivering, almost strangled, they fought the flesh, and the vast silent multitude questioned them with its glance. Suddenly Diocletian rose to his feet, rent his garment, and in the purple shadows of the amphitheatre a harsh, prolonged shout went up. That night at his palace the Master of the World could not be comforted, and the Venus was carried about Rome and great homage was accorded her. In their homes the two flute players unceasingly wept; they well knew the power of music and its conquering evil.



VERL

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Her train a
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She neither
Trudge, lit*

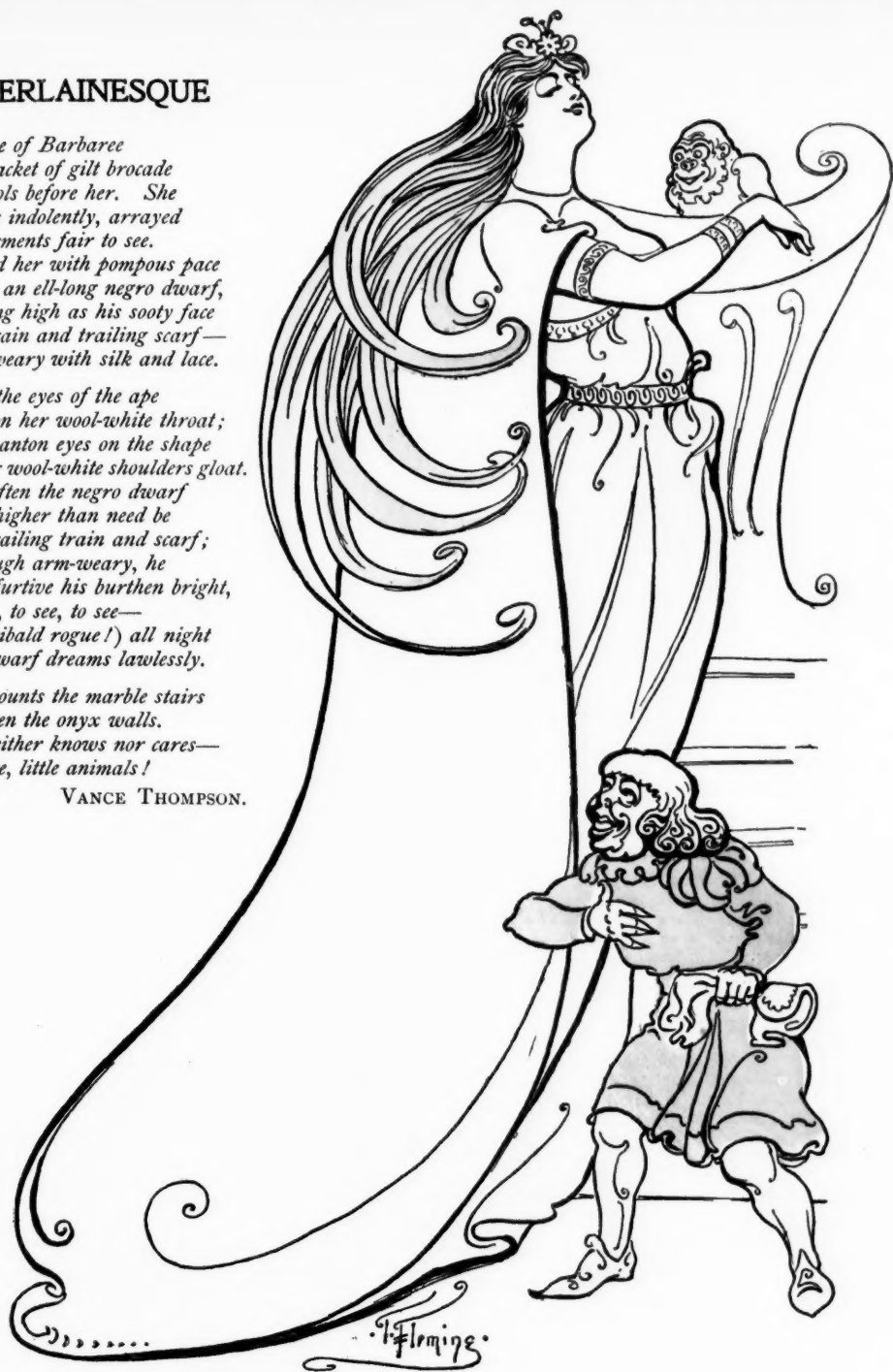
VERLAINESQUE

*An ape of Barbaree
In a jacket of gilt brocade
Gambols before her. She
Walks indolently, arrayed
In garments fair to see.
Behind her with pompous pace
Struts an ell-long negro dwarf,
Holding high as his sooty face
Her train and trailing scarf—
Arm-weary with silk and lace.*

*Ever the eyes of the ape
Dote on her wool-white throat;
His wanton eyes on the shape
Of her wool-white shoulders gloat.
And often the negro dwarf
Lifts higher than need be
The trailing train and scarf;
Although arm-weary, he
Lifts furtive his burthen bright,
To see, to see, to see—
For (ribald rogue!) all night
The dwarf dreams lawlessly.*

*She mounts the marble stairs
Between the onyx walls.
She neither knows nor cares—
Trudge, little animals!*

VANCE THOMPSON.



POLITE LETTERS



Mysticism is the mode. Tolstoi, Huysmans, Maeterlinck—even Jean Richepin. But then Richepin is one of the uncommon persons and never has been himself. In his youth he was breathed upon by Victor Hugo and there has always clung to him an air of rhetorical pretention. Since then a fever has consumed him—the intermittent fever to be someone else. By turns he has been a little Hugo, a more vicious Mendes, a more brutal Zola, a Coppee equally bourgeois, and now he is as mystic as Mallarme, but banal.

A foolish correspondent asks me why I object to Mr. Richard Watson Gilder's habit of printing his verses in "The Century," when I print my own poems in "M'lle New York." He is indeed a foolish correspondent. Mr. Gilder prints his because they are his own; I print mine because they are good.



The formulae of modern mysticism are very easily mastered. Be simple, with the simplicity of Panurge's sheep—but for this you must read Rabelais; indulge freely in archaic refrain; begin every stanza with "Oh!" or "O"; multiply by three or seven, they are the mystic numbers. In chief, remember that you must make yourself a little child if you would enter the kingdom of the mystics.

By the way—

Mr. Henry Norman, an estimable on his return an equally estimable person, who is now the literary editor of the "Daily devoted an idiotic article—though estimable the Franco-Belgian poet. In this article he Probably the next thing you hear from him heavenly choir or that George Moore is on the way to Damascus.



person who went round the world and married journeyed in breeks through the Karpathians, Chronicle" of London. The other day he he is almost an idiot—to Emile Verhaeren, accused M. Verhaeren of being a mystic. will be that Armande Sylvestre has joined the

Another correspondent asks me why I permit Mr. Fleming to caricature the Jew and—two queries in one—why I permit Mr. Hamlin to laud the negro. Why? It is a matter of pure prejudice. You prefer port, I prefer sherry; it is futile to debate questions of personal taste. And so I may prefer one odor and you another; discussion is equally futile. You will rarely find a man who likes both the odor of heliotrope and that of the garden-rose.

Three parts of French verse is only prose, cadenced and rhymed, but prose. The introduction of "free verse," as it is called, was an attempt on the part of the young poets of the day to find a poetical vehicle. And it is not in accord with the genius of the French language. The "vers libre" which has fascinated all the young poets (one may except Henri de Regnier) is American in genesis and development. It was Viele-Griffin, an American, who has elected to write in French, who carried over the aesthetic formulae of Walt Whitman. He wrote them down—on a classic papyrus, to be sure—and young France acclaimed them.

The form, then, of modern French verse is exotic. In addition the poets are aliens. There are the two Americans, Stuart Merrill and Viele-Griffin; the Greek, Jean Moreas; the Netherlander, Emile Verhaeren; Marie Krynski, the Jewess; Gustave Kahn, the Jew; Jose Maria de Heredia, the Cuban Mulatto—it is an invasion more terrible than that of the Prussians, menacing not the territory, but the language, of France. The Romans of the decadence saw their literature invaded and dislocated by the barbarians. It was the beginning of the end of the empire.

Charles Wesley prayed in the hymn, "O, Lord! the dark Americans convert." This is the aim and end of "M'lle New York."

It is not too much to say that modern French verse is in a measure a creation of Walt Whitman. In a much larger measure it is true that modern French literature is a creation of Edgar Allen Poe. It was in France that Poe found the native country of his genius. Here he was overshadowed by flatulent rhymesters like Longfellow and Lowell and all the vapid inanities of—God save the mark!—American literature. He had genius, and the man of genius is always an alien in his own land. The critics made moral gestures at him; the people read Bryant and Whittier and other half-forgotten worthies. In France he found his true glory. To him is due the vital principle in the work of Banville and the Parnassians, Leconte de Lisle, de Goncourt, d'Aurevilly, Villiers de L'Isle Adam, Huysmans, and many other illustrious men from Baudelaire to Verlaine.

He gave France an artistic conscience.

Himself a master of the short prose tale, he made possible that greater master, de Maupassant. In two hundred years America has produced two men of genius—both she has disowned.

I object to Mr. Richard Harding Davis because he is essentially bourgeois and ridiculous. His appeal is to the suburban mind—the commuters' intelligence. He walks abroad and shows himself—which is not a proof of his wit. He has written books which demonstrate that he is a formidable imbecile.



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While in England and America there is very little literary activity, in the unregarded corners of the earth new writers are coming to the front. Who has concerned himself with Italian letters in late years? And yet there are D'Annunzio and Negri. Spain, Holland, Sweden have felt the new impulse in literature and now there has come out of insignificant Portugal a writer whose work must be taken into serious consideration. Portugal?

When one has said Camoens one has said almost all. Some of us have read Joao de Deus, a poet who has written wonderful, perfect lyrics. But Joao de Deus is old now. Last March his countrymen celebrated the sixty-fifth anniversary of his birth. His writing days are over. The man of the day in that disregarded little country is Eugenio de Castro. His latest volume has achieved an extraordinary success. Before that he was chiefly known by "Interlunio," which appeared, I believe, in 1891. Far more ambitious is the new work, "Belkiss, Queen of Sheba, of Axum, and of Hymiar" (Francisco Franca Amada, Coimbra). It is a dramatic poem in prose, if one may use an awkward phrase. It is written in a style which suggests the Flaubert of "Salambo"—plastic, vibrant, marvellously colored. There is occasional extravagance, and at times the volubility of youth is given full rein, but when all is said there remains a work of high power, distinction, and exquisite lyric quality.

A word of wisdom from Mr. Aphorip: "'Art, the noblest blossom of every age,' is always aristocratic. Democratic art is a contradiction in terms."

In de Castro's drama, Belkiss, the young queen of Sheba, loves Solomon, whom she considers the wisest and mightiest of kings, though she has never seen him. She proclaims aloud her love for him. Hadrud, the dethroned king of Edom, is a pretender to her hand. He assures her that Solomon is unworthy of her love.

"You are his enemy," the young queen replies, "Solomon is powerful, just, and tender." "Ay, so strong that he has had to call on Egypt to aid him in conquering Guezer; so just that he has usurped the rights of his brother Adonijah; so tender that he left the Queen Vaphres to die of desertion and despair."

"It does not matter," the queen answers, "in spite of all I love him and shall be his."

However, the words of Hadrud have impressed the young girl. And in addition Zophe-samin, the old priest and savant, who has instructed her since her childhood, urges her to put no confidence in the Jewish king. But in the insomnolent nights she dreams of the kisses of Solomon—of Solomon, who loves women as she loves precious stones. And Belkiss follows her destiny.

Her love was a form of humility, a ravished and ecstatic mode of genuflection.



The Admiral of Solomon's wisdom and beauty. Omens and her, and she sets out for Jerusalem among the splendid women whom In the last act of this truly remarkable Youth is dead and dreams are dead; there is only

My objection to William Dean Howells is as upon his moral snobbishness. I do not wish to Apocalypse, but he and Gilder (the American literature. While Mr. Gilder is undoubtedly the worse of the

In Germany the notable event Founded in Berlin a few months forms of art, to prepare the way for a and doctrines are abandoned at the of Richepin's chameleonic theory—is note of young Germany, in politics as has laid frantic emphasis on it; Lang-brandt, Educator," about which there same string; Karl Kuechenmeister, the question with admirable force in gest that it is only a step from individ- heard Prince Krapotkine define nihil- the name of individual liberty, of all the family, and religion."

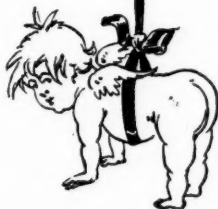
The trend of modern thought The Pan society has issued a periodical literature. Two numbers German and partly in French. Among and Vallaton.

fleet bears her tidings of Solomon's glory, his the outcry of the court—nothing will stay There her fate is accomplished. She is one Solomon loves as she loves precious stones. drama she has returned to the palace of Sheba. knowledge of good and evil.

based not so much upon his intellectual priggishness rage against him as though he were the beast of the Misses Gilder) and that ilk are the chief defect of Howells merits one's habitual indignation, Mr. two. I have never known a man so uniformly nul.

in letters is the organization of the Pan Society. ago, its aim is, by according an equal care to all multiple and organic artistic life. All formulae outset. Individuality at any cost—the antithesis the end to be attained. This, by the way, is the in letters, in art as in the conduct of life. Nietzsche behn, the mysterious and sterile author of "Rem- was so much pother five years ago, twanged the the first of German critics in this day, discusses "Der Kampf um die Persoenlichkeit. You sug- ualism to nihilism. Unquestionably. I once: ism as "absolute individualism—the negation, in obligations imposed on the individual by society,

toward individualism is not without significance. review, which is undoubtedly the masterpiece of have already appeared. It is published partly in the foreign contributors are Whistler, Garborg,



WHITE MUSIC AND—JEWISH



LUNAR LITANY

*Eucharistie
De l'Arcadie,
Qui fais de l'œil
Aux cœurs en deuil,
Ciel des idylles
Qu'on veut stériles,
Fonts baptismaux
Des blancs pierrots
Dernier ciboire
De notre Histoire,
Vortex-nombril
Du Tout-nihil,
Miroir et Bible
Des Impassible,
Hotel garni
De l'infini,
Sphinx et Joconde
Des défunts mondes
O Chanaan
Du bon Neant,
Neant, La Mecque
Des bibliothèques,
Léthe, Lotos,
Exaudi nos.*

J. LAFORGUE.

The musical conductors of New York are singularly incompetent. Mr. Walter Damrosch has industry and ambition; he has written an opera which is a singularly fine imitation of real music; he is an accomplished accompanist on the piano; but it would be sheer flattery to call him a second-rate conductor. Mr. Seidl was Wagner's private secretary once upon a time. With this in his favor it was quite natural that New York should accept him at Mr. Krehbiel's valuation. Mr. Krehbiel has an instinct—an intuition—for mediocrities. But you and I will have none of Mr. Seidl. He is but a poor, serious creature, tangled and confused in Wagnerian formulae and tradition. He does not interpret because he himself has not understood. Franz van der Stucken in certain—but he is away to where the beer is better. Boston has Emile Pauer, who is a sort of human, or inhuman, metronome.

What a wonderful field is here for a man of genius!

Neither Mr. Seidl nor Mr. Damrosch can compose a programme; neither of them is acquainted with the trend of modern music. They do not know, as you and I know, that Wagner said not the last word but the first. But leave all that aside. Take one instance of Mr. Damrosch's iniquity. Wishing to give his programme "variety," he agrees with his eminent rival, Mr. Bial, that there must be a little German, a little French, a little Russian. So he writes in Tschaikowsky's name and that of Rubenstein as representative Russian composers. Tschaikowsky, this tenth-rate and prolix musician, who had neither musicianly breeding nor personal and racial inspiration; Rubenstein, a heterogeneous compound of vulgar Italianism and German processes, deformed in the stealings, who echoed that echo, Raff; who was a man of talent, but, like every Jew, without genius or originality. Mr. Damrosch simply does not know music from the Rubensteiner imitation. He has left unregarded the true school of Russian music, which has in these days renewed the traditions of the race and applied to Sclavonic melody the resources of modern musical art. Of Glazounow, Rimsky-Korsakow, and Balakirew he has given us nothing. This magnificent music, known this decade to Paris and Berlin, is still unknown in New York and London, these capitals of Suburbia. Bitter and tender, naive and complicated, spiritual and sensual, violent and mystic—dear Lord! none of this. Are there not Tschaikowsky and the Jew? In regard to German and French music, Mr. Damrosch preserves the same attitude. Not Cesar Franck, but Gounod! Mr. Damrosch is impossible.

Belgium produces violinists and organists. Its art was strongly influenced by Italian church music—influenced, but not dominated—and in later days Wagner's influence has changed without controlling it. Indeed, Belgian music, by living on terms of fellowship with its neighbors, has retained in a large measure its own individuality. An admirable illustration is Dr. Ad. Samuel's "Christus," which was given three times at Gand a few weeks ago. M. Boyer writes to "Mlle New York": "'Christus' is an extremely remarkable work—a mystic idyll if you like the phrase, or a lyric mystery. Dr. Samuel describes it as a mystic symphony. It is composed for orchestra, chorus, and organ. Its theme, of course, is the life and death of Christ. The influence of Wagner—it is only the influence—is strongly perceptible in Dr. Samuel's work. There is something of the fervor and mysticism of the early church in 'Christus,' something of Parsifal. I can not at this writing attempt to analyze the music; if it lacks the indefinable quality which makes the masterpiece, it is, as I have said, remarkable. Its success has been very great. Incidental causes may have contributed to this success. Dr. Samuel is a Jew. 'Christus' is understood to be his artistic recantation, his 'ninth symphony,' as it were. It has been said that he has joined the Catholic Church and that 'Christus' is his public profession of faith. This may not be true, but it is the news of the day."

M. Boyer's letter, it should be added, was written in French.

A practical symbol: The cruel cannibal takes his place above the others of his tribe; after having dragged his prisoner from the box where he had lain, closely confined, he grips the poor wretch with hands and knees. He smiles a confidential smile, as one who should say, "You observe my might; I handle him as I please." He raises his shining sword, the edge so fine it would have cut a flying rose-leaf, and, while his left hand clutches the victim's throat almost to strangulation, the right hand passes the blade—gently, oh, so gently!—across the abdomen of the unfortunate captive; gently and slowly that the poor wretch may feel the shining agony sink inch by inch into his flesh.

The prisoner cries aloud, a dolorous cry that rises and falls, piteous, interminable—

And so, bent over his violoncello, from which he draws plaintive, marvellous sounds, he seems to be a cruel savage in the act of martyring a missionary.



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





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